

P 091803Z DEC 94
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4389
INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ASMARA

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 34022

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER PINR SU FR
SUBJECT: FRANCE ON SUDAN: SHOW US PROOF OF TERRORIST SUPPORT

REF: STATE 277307

11. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

12. SUMMARY. QUAI OFFICIALS STATE THEY ARE NOT FIRMLY CONVINCED OF SUDANESE SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM, AND ASK FOR FIRMER PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF TRAINING CAMPS. THEY STRESS THAT THE POVERTY OF SUDAN, IN THEIR VIEW, PREVENTS IT FROM BEING A SUPPORTER OF TERRORISM IN THE FASHION OF A LIBYA OR AN IRAN. END SUMMARY.

SUDANESE TOO POOR TO SUPPORT TERRORISM?

13. QUAI DIRECTOR FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN AFRICAN AFFAIRS BERNADETTE LE FORT AND SUDAN DESKOFF RAJA RABIA TOLD VISITING INR TERRORISM ANALYST GINA BENNETT DECEMBER 8 THAT THE FRENCH BELIEVE THE SUDANESE LACK THE FINANCIAL MEANS TO SUPPORT TERRORISM. LE FORT MENTIONED THAT IN THE PAST, TERRORIST GROUPS HAVE TYPICALLY HAD SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FROM A STATE, SUCH AS IRAN OR LIBYA, AND THAT SUDAN QUITE SIMPLY LACKED THE SAME SORT OF RESOURCES THAT THOSE COUNTRIES HAVE.

14. LE FORT SAID THE FRENCH HAVE BEEN TOLD THERE ARE UPWARDS OF 23 CAMPS AROUND KHARTOUM. THEY ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT BIN LADEN, A SAUDI STRIPPED OF HIS CITIZENSHIP WHO IS STILL A PATRON TO SOME TERRORIST GROUPS, HAS A NUMBER OF SO-CALLED FARMS IN SOUTHERN SUDAN. SHE ADDED THAT THE FRENCH DO NOT BELIEVE ANY SERIOUS "MILITARY" TRAINING WAS TAKING PLACE IN SUDAN.

FRENCH FEEL SUDAN NOT AN "ACTIVE" SUPPORTER OF TERRORISM

15. LE FORT SAID THAT FRANCE WAS CONCERNED BY THE "SYMBOLIC MEANING" OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN SUDAN TO SUBSAHARAN AFRICA, BUT HAD NO EVIDENCE THAT SUDAN IS "ACTIVELY" SUPPORTING TERRORISM. "WE FOLLOW SOME GROUPS CAREFULLY, AND WORRY MORE ABOUT THEIR MORAL INFLUENCE MORE THAN THEIR ACTIVE INFLUENCE," SHE SAID. SHE OPINED THAT MOST COUNTRIES TERRORISM PROBLEMS ARE HOMEGROWN, CITING ALGERIA AS AN EXAMPLE. SHE ALSO MENTIONED SUDAN'S PERMEABLE BORDERS AND SUGGESTED THERE MIGHT BE ACTIVITIES WITHIN SUDAN THAT ARE UNKNOWN TO ITS GOVERNMENT. SHE SAID THAT FRANCE NEVERTHELESS REMAINS "VERY FIRM" IN ITS DEALINGS WITH THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT. RABIA MENTIONED SEPARATELY THAT THE GOF CONSIDERS TURABI "DANGEROUS", AND THAT FRANCE SHOULD IN NO WAY BE CONSIDERED A SUPPORTER OF THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT.

FRENCH ASK TO SEE EVIDENCE

16. LE FORT ASKED WHETHER THE USG HAS SPECIFIC EVIDENCE OF TRAINING OF HAMAS IN SUDAN, AND WHETHER THE USG COULD SHARE CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF

TERRORIST TRAINING CAMPS IN SUDAN. RABIA MENTIONED THAT SUCH EVIDENCE WOULD BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL TO FRANCE DURING ITS PRESIDENCY OF THE EU.

17. WE RESPONDED THAT WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS ANY LONGER THE CASE THAT TERRORIST GROUPS NEED A MAJOR STATE SPONSOR OR EVEN EASILY IDENTIFIABLE TRAINING CAMPS, IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT THEIR ACTIVITIES, CITING THE WORLD TRADE CENTER BOMBERS AS EXAMPLES. WE REITERATED THAT WE VIEWED THE HARBORING OF TERRORISTS AND PERMITTING THEM TO TRAIN IN SUDAN AS SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM. WE SAID WE WOULD PASS ON THE FRENCH REQUEST TO SEE MORE CONCRETE EVIDENCE.

COMMENT

18. THIS IS THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION WE HAVE HAD IN RESPONSE TO OUR DEMARCHE ON TERRORISM IN SUDAN (REF). WE AND THE FRENCH ARE SEEING SOME OF THE SAME FACTS (I.E. THE EXISTENCE OF CAMPS AND THE PRESENCE OF KNOWN TERRORISTS IN SUDAN), BUT ARE ASCRIBING DIFFERENT MEANINGS TO THEM. THE FRENCH MAY HAVE MORE OF AN AGENDA IN SUDAN THAN THEY ARE WILLING TO SHARE WITH US. ONE WELL-INFORMED NON-GOVERNMENT SOURCE SUGGESTS FRANCE WANTS TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH TURABI ET AL., IN THE HOPE OF USING SUDAN TO MODERATE ISLAMISTS IN ALGERIA.

BOHLEN